



# San Diego City Attorney Michael J. Aguirre

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **CONSUMER ALERT** **SOFT CHEESE MAY BE TAINTED WITH SALMONELLA** *SAN DIEGO CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE CONVICTS MOBILE FOOD OPERATOR AND SUPPLIER FOR SELLING INFECTED CHEESE*

**San Diego, CA:** The City Attorney's Office convicted both a mobile food operator and his supplier for holding adulterated cheese for sale. Today, Antonio Olalde Munoz, owner of Tony's Produce, pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge for keeping for sale contaminated soft ranch style cheese that tested positive for Salmonella Typhimurium. In 2004, this same strain of Salmonella was found in raw milk cheese products that had poisoned over 45 victims in San Diego County. The case was prosecuted by Deputy City Attorney Joan McNamara of the City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit. The case came as result of a joint investigation by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Milk and Dairy Foods Safety Branch and the San Diego County Environmental Health Department.

"This is a critical prosecution – it reminds consumers not to purchase unlabeled, unpasteurized cheese or other unlabeled, raw milk products," said City Attorney Michael Aguirre. "These food items can make people seriously ill or may even be fatal, especially for the young or elderly."

Munoz was sentenced to three years probation, ten days public work service, and ordered to pay \$2,070 in costs to the County of San Diego. In March, the City Attorney's Office convicted Munoz's cheese supplier, Clemente Monroe Adame, for two misdemeanor charges of offering contaminated cheese for sale. Adame was sentenced to three years probation, 30 days public work service with 60 days custody stayed, ordered to provide details regarding his supplier of the cheese, and to pay \$2,517 in costs. Many people buy this cheese because they prefer the unpasteurized home-style fresh ranch cheese, Queso Fresco, that is common in Mexico.

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